

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Rob McKenna
Metropolitan
King County
Council
District Six
(206) 296-1006



King County needs effective handling of I-695

How do local families and businesses decide what to include in their budgets? By setting priorities, of course. They fund the most important things first. Government should respond to Initiative 695's cut in car tab revenues with the same kind of common sense.

That's what I wrote in a *Seattle Times* guest editorial on December 13. A copy is included with this newsletter. I hope you will read it and share with me any thoughts you have on the importance of prioritization in making budget decisions. As the incoming chairman of the County Council's Budget and Fiscal Management Committee, your input will be important to me.

King County is the largest local government in the state of Washington. We had an opportunity to set an example for every other county and city in the state with our year 2000 budget. Unfortunately, we missed that opportunity.

The county executive and a majority of the county council consciously decided to fund several programs in our Public Health department and Sheriff's Office – including the only law enforcement helicopter in King County – for just the first six months of 2000. They believe that this strategy of partially funding essential programs will improve our chances of lobbying the state legislature for additional funding.

Our police officers and public health clinic patients should never be used as human shields for our Olympia lobbyists. We could have fully funded public safety for the entire year if we had budgeted with the proper sense of priorities.

Ours is a large county and county government has the ability to re-prioritize spending to keep serving those who depend the most on our public safety and health programs. Instead, we chose the worst possible outcome: to increase property taxes by three times the rate of inflation while reducing vital services.

During our budget debate, I presented a long list of possible efficiencies and cuts to non-essential services (they are detailed in my guest editorial) that could have been used to fully fund the Sheriff's Office and our public health clinics. After most of these efficiencies and cuts were rejected, I voted "no" on the \$2.4 billion budget that ultimately passed.

King County should have used the same kind of common sense in budgeting for the year 2000 that families and businesses use in everyday life. If we had, the Sheriff's Office and public health clinics would be fully funded today and the impact of I-695 on county services would have been minimized.

I will do everything I can to bring a true sense of priorities to King County's budget for 2001. I would appreciate hearing any comments you have about what approach the county should take to the passage of I-695, or about my *Seattle Times* editorial.

Sincerely,

Rob McKenna

Eastside Domestic Violence Program Among Recipients of Grant Funds

Several key Bellevue agencies and projects will receive grants that I proposed for inclusion in the county's year 2000 budget. **Eastside Domestic Violence Program** (EDVP) will receive \$5,000 to assist families coping with the human misery created by domestic violence. Because the fight against domestic violence is so important, I have invested substantial amounts of time and energy in EDVP. As a team captain for EDVP's capital campaign and chairman of it's first annual Eastside benefit luncheon, I've also helped raise private sector funds to assist victims and educate the public.

Several Bellevue organizations that invest in the welfare of our youth will also receive funds: **Bellevue Boys and Girls Club** \$2,500; **Youth Eastside Services** \$5,000; **Bellevue Community College**

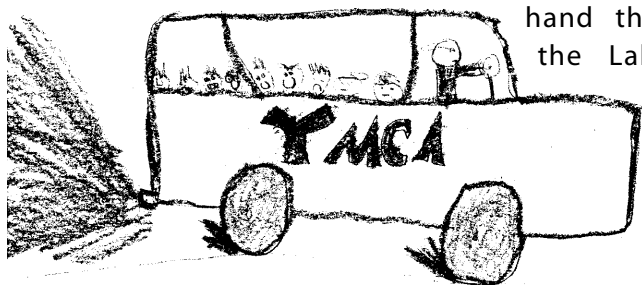
Childcare Center \$7,500; **Northwest Chinese School** \$2,500; and **Music Works Northwest** \$2,500.

In addition, **Eastside Adult Day Services** will receive \$7,500 to help the frail elderly and the developmentally disabled. Our excellent local symphony orchestra, the **Bellevue Philharmonic**, will receive \$2,500. As a regional government, King County's contributions to Bellevue's growing community needs are not only vitally important but a key responsibility.

County funding will also be provided in our year 2000 budget for the **Boy Scouts of America**, the **King County Domestic Violence Coalition**, **Youth Care – Friends Of Street Kids** and the **Pacific Science Center** to benefit children and families throughout the entire Eastside. ■

Lake Heights YMCA Receives Surplus Van

As part of our 1999 budget, the King County Council distributed 26 surplus Metro vans to social service organizations across the county. I nominated the Lake Heights YMCA for a van based on the quality of programs they provide for both youth and seniors. The mission of Lake Heights YMCA is all the more important because there is not yet a community center for seniors and youth in Bellevue south of I-90. As a participant with my two daughters in the *Y-Princess* program, I know first-hand that the Lake



Heights YMCA fills a tremendous need with their recreational services for families, seniors and youth. I have no doubt that the van we've provided will be in use day and night.

By donating surplus vans to organizations such as the Lake Heights YMCA, King County can actually save money that would otherwise be spent on providing expensive paratransit service to the same clients. On December 10 I had the opportunity to visit the Lake Heights YMCA, meet Branch Executive Director Scott Sadler and other members of the staff, and officially hand over the keys to the van. The best part, of course, was getting to spend time with the kids there. *For additional information on the Lake Heights YMCA, please contact Scott Sadler at (425) 644-8417.* ■

Bellevue Downtown Access Project

One of the most important Sound Transit projects in East King County is the Bellevue Downtown Access Project (Bellevue DAP). As currently planned, the project would build new transit-only off-ramps at NE 6th, connecting to the new Bellevue Transportation Center and reconfigure existing interchanges at NE 4th and NE 8th. Also in the mix is a new flyover ramp from the SE 8th Exit directly to Richards Road/116th SE. The total cost of the Bellevue DAP is projected to be \$120 million, with funding expected from Sound Transit, the state and the federal government.

With Bellevue's continued growth as an urban center, what we do with I-405 and how it connects Downtown Bellevue with the rest of the Eastside will make or break our regional transportation system. According to the City of Bellevue, without the Bellevue DAP, there is only enough transportation infrastructure in the downtown core to accommodate existing residential and commercial building projects –

nothing else. That's why I'm concerned about the potential loss of \$10 million in state funding for the Bellevue DAP, due to the elimination of the state motor vehicle excise tax.

The City of Bellevue is currently updating its downtown transportation plan, so that future land use decisions will be directly linked to transportation investments. Having chaired the King County Council's Transportation Committee for the past four years, and in my new role as chair of the Council's budget committee, I will work to ensure that we do our part in coordinating Metro Transit service and capital investments with other transportation projects in Bellevue's urban center. And as a member of the



Proposed new Bellevue Transportation Center

Sound Transit Board and vice-chair of the state Transportation Improvement Board, I will work to ensure that the Bellevue DAP remains on time and on budget.



Councilmembers Rob McKenna (left) and Jane Hague (right) recognized the Sammamish High School football team and Head Coach Dwaine Hatch on their second place finish in the 1999 WIAA 3A conference state championship.

Town Hall

Meet with King County Councilmember Rob McKenna

Please join us:

February 12:

10- 11:30 a.m. Bellevue City Hall - Council Chambers
11511 Main St., Bellevue

Also speaking:

Senator Dan McDonald

Mayor Chuck Mosher, Bellevue

1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Renton Community Center
1715 Maple Valley Highway, Renton

Also speaking:

Councilmember Randy Corman,

Renton City Council President

February 17:

7 - 8:30p.m. Stroum Jewish Community Center -
Pollock Lounge

3801 E. Mercer Way, Mercer Island

Also speaking:

Mayor Alan Merkle, Mercer Island



Rob McKenna

Metropolitan King County Council
District Six
516 3rd Avenue, Room 1200
Seattle, Wa 98104
(206) 296-1006
email: rob.mckenna@metrokc.gov

Important community update
